

**A PROPOSAL FOR THE REVISION OF
TRANSPARENCY POLICIES OF THE COLORADO
COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Progressive Student Alliance

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GOALS FOR INCREASED TRANSPARENCY

1. Provide access for student body engagement in issues that directly affect them
 - a. Allowing students to view the decision making process for policies that affect them directly is of the utmost importance. This could open up more avenues of communication between the Board and the student body and facilitate a more amicable relationship between the two parties.
 - b. The Board creates policies that directly affect the lives of the students and better the students' experiences. Students are therefore naturally interested in understanding the decision-making process.
2. Create avenues for students to become informed about the governing body of their school
 - a. While information concerning the Board of Trustees exists online, the information is difficult to understand and not comprehensive. More information provided to students as well as the ability to view Board meetings would help students understand how the school operates on a macro level.
 - b. Students should be informed about the Board. Colorado College is a highly unique school and has the opportunity to open paths for students to understand that issues that affect them as well as become informed citizens and students of the college.
3. Practice for political efficacy
 - a. Colorado College as an institution does an amazing job preparing students to be the best citizens possible and this is another avenue through which that goal can be pursued.
 - b. Learning about governance can help students become more engaged citizens.
 - c. This allows students to explore how political decisions affect their lives directly.

MODEL FOR REVISED TRANSPARENCY

Because the students of the Progressive Student Alliance believe in the need for transparency of governance, we propose the following guidelines to improve transparency:

1. More detailed explanation of how the Board operates including governance procedures.
 - a. While the bylaws for the college are available to the public on the Colorado College website, there is no explanation of certain procedures such as how new Trustees are selected for service on the Board.
 - b. If written procedures not included in the bylaws exist, this regulatory information should be made available to the college community. In the event that these practices aren't official regulations of the Board, a detailed explanation of practiced methods should be made available.
2. Detailed and accessible minutes within a month from the meeting dates from all Board meetings, including standing committees.
 - a. Although minutes are available on the Colorado College website, they are not updated in a timely fashion. We suggest the minutes should be available to the students within a month of the meeting date.
 - b. Minutes must be more detailed to ensure students have a grasp of what policies are being implemented by the college. Minutes should include both broad decisions made by the Board as well as practical next steps the college intends on taking in order to actualize the plan created.
 - c. Detailed minutes from standing committee and strategic planning team meetings should also be available to students. Students are currently entirely in the dark about both the fact that there are committees and SPTS on the Board as well as what those committees and SPTs do.
3. Open access to board meetings for students, faculty and staff.
 - a. For all non-confidential decisions made and discussed by the Board, students, faculty and staff should be allowed to observe the proceedings.
 - b. Regulations for observer behavior at Board meetings will be outlined in the next section.

REGULATIONS FOR OBSERVANCE OF BOARD MEETINGS

While open Board meetings are of the utmost importance, some concerns are legitimate. Thus, we propose the following rules and regulations regarding observance of meetings:

1. Upon entrance, all observers must provide a valid CC ID (Gold Card) for proof of college connection.
2. Observers will not speak or disturb the proceedings in any way.
3. All observers will be respectful of the Board members as well as the other observers.
4. The students, faculty and staff of the college will be made aware of the time, date, and location of all Board meetings as soon as the information is available.
5. During which time the Board determines matters of a confidential nature are to be discussed, observers must exit the meeting to be readmitted if and when the confidential matters have been addressed.

FAQ

Why is important to have transparency for the meeting minutes?

For most Colorado College students, the Board of Trustees acts as a governing body that has very little interaction with the overall student population on campus. In efforts to create a relationship between the student body and the board of trustees, it is necessary for the board to allow for students to understand what is happening in the tri-yearly board meetings, held each year in February, June and November. Allowing students an opportunity to better understand how Colorado College plans for the future enables students to take ownership of their institution.

Gaining access to detailed meeting notes provides students with an accurate sense of how their college is progressing. Students want to ensure that their values are being upheld and represented accurately. If the board were able to include thorough descriptions of their meetings it would be more effective for students who want to become more active and engaged with the internal processes of the college.

Transparency of meeting minutes allows for students to read what the board has actually discussed. The usual synopsis, sent out by President Tiefenthaler, often result in students being left uninformed and frustrated. The student body wants to be included Colorado College's future.

What about confidential matters?

Portions of the board meetings should be kept confidential. This being said, the requirements for confidentiality in particular board discussions should not extend to the entirety of the meetings. The Progressive Student Alliance understands that to accommodate students into board meetings takes more time, effort, and space. However, having an agreement with students on when it is appropriate to attend board meetings and when meetings are closed allows for a way to manage student involvement. We are asking that the board consider making public portions of meetings.

Why do minutes need to be available within a month?

After much consideration on the length of time needed to transcribe meeting notes and accurately provide the amount of detail that the Progressive Student Alliance is asking for, we have chosen that it would be effective for the student body to see meeting notes one month after the board meeting occurs. This request spawned from the reality that meeting notes are often sent to the students after certain decisions have already been implemented. We request that students are given information on upcoming changes to the college before they occur. This would be possible if the meeting notes were sent to the student body within one month of the tri-yearly board meetings. Any request for shorter time does not allow Board Secretary Susan Burghart enough time to adequately summarize board activities and for the Board members to approve her minutes.

Hopefully, a timeframe of one month will ensure students are informed of actions agreed upon by the Board before they are implemented.

If the Board provides minutes, why do meetings need to be open?

While minutes are a great way to include the entire population of the school, opening meetings to students, faculty and staff to sit in on provides opportunities that mere minutes cannot. Attending Board meetings would provide interested students with the ability to directly understand why decisions are being made, and what decisions are being made. The first hand experience of viewing a Board meeting would both engage students in the affairs of the school, as well as prepare them for political efficacy in the real world that extends beyond simply voting. While minutes are of vital importance to transparency, they cannot replace the value of open meetings.

How can we incorporate student input while respecting College governance?

This proposal was created to allow more student involvement with the Board meeting processes. Colorado College has provided opportunities to the student body through academic, athletic, and/or social events. The students want to give back to the college that has given us an unmatched intellectual experience. Similarly to the Board of Trustees, the student body wants to improve the college by fixing existing problems that students face. In no way would student observation and increased transparency become detrimental to the governance of the college. Students recognize that the Board exists to ensure the college is the best it can be, but we also recognize that this proposal is key to ensuring that ideal is realized.

How does this help the school as an institution?

The best institutions are those that are held accountable to those they serve. Not only will the acceptance of this proposal help the students of the college, but it will also help the school as a whole. It enriches the academic atmosphere of Colorado College and creates an engaged student body unprecedented in our peer schools. This proposal thereby represents a unique opportunity for Colorado College to model of student engagement and transparency in governance.

TRANSPARENCY MODELS AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

According to Colorado Sunshine Law (SB 91-33, Section 24-6-401 of the Colorado Revised Statutes), all public universities must have open meetings for their governing boards. The pertinent information of the Application Section (Section II) is quoted below:

The law applies to Planning Commissions and Boards of Adjustment as well as County Commissioners, Boards of Trustees and City Councils. A local public body includes:

any board, committee, commission, authority, or another advisory; policymaking, rule-making, or formally constituted body of any political subdivision of the state ... but does not include administrative staff. 24-6-402(1)(a).

Political subdivision is defined to include:

any county, city, city and county, town, home rule city, home rule county, home rule city and county, school district, special district, local improvement district, special improvement district, or service district. 24-6-402(1)(c).

While this statute does not apply to the private institution of Colorado College, public universities (such as the CU system: <http://www.cu.edu/regents>) in the state have implemented transparency models similar to the one proposed in this document with great success. Although the college is not legally obligated to agree to this proposal, the students believe it will be an overall asset to the institution. This can set us apart from our peer schools and show our commitment to transparency and the advancement of the liberal arts education.